



**Hard Times Kitchen**  
As food prices go up,  
this VISTA gets busy!



**Feature Story:**  
Issues of Supply and Demand bring  
Hunger into National Focus

**VISTA Viewfinder**  
Issue 6: July 8, 2008

**VISTA: Volunteers In Service To America**  
Since 1964, 175,000 Strong



**VISTA**  
**viewfinder**



1 VISTA  
since 1964

2 Volunteers  
in Service

3 175,000  
Strong

**VISTA**

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#### ISSUE 6: July 8, 2008

##### Hard Times Kitchen



Alauna Dowd Fizer arrived in Cleveland, Miss., in June of last year to serve as a VISTA Summer Associate. She returned in February to serve a full-year term with the Lower Mississippi Delta Service Corps, Inc. (a project of the Mississippi Commission).

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#### FAQ

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Asked Questions](#)

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"When I first got here in the Volunteer Center in Cleveland, [the project] was a blank slate," explained Alauna, whose supervisor encouraged her to develop her VISTA assignment based on her skills and interests. Then food prices went up.

Drawing on training in journalism, she began collecting information about food budgeting from universities and other programs. She created a 45-minute workshop on how to budget for food, plan weekly menus and find coupons and other discounts when shopping.

"If you buy staple foods (like pastas and soups), you can turn a meal into another meal," said Alauna. "Buy in bulk, and don't shop hungry. By planning out your meals, you can go to the grocery store to get what you need, not what you want. You'll save hundreds of dollars every month."

With outreach to local newspapers, churches and community hubs, Alauna has presented the workshop to about 200 community members, including food stamps recipients. Another workshop targeted VISTAs and AmeriCorps members. She plans to train community leaders as presenters to carry on the workshop.

"I still get calls from people who were in the program over the summer, saying, 'I've saved so much money. It's really helped in these hard times,'" she said.

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## Local Food Banks Feel Effects of Struggling Economy



Dave Hsia ended his VISTA service in January 2008 after

a year and a half at the New York City Coalition Against Hunger.

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An increase in the amount of people in need of donated food, along with fewer donations, and the high cost of transportation are having a critical impact on the nation's food banks.

America's Second Harvest—a national food bank network, conducted a survey of its food banks from April 28 through May 2, 2008 to assess challenges facing the nation's charitable distribution system due to weakening economic conditions.

180 food banks provided estimates, based on feedback they have received from their partner agencies (including food pantries and soup kitchens). Researchers gathered information on the number of people in need of emergency food assistance, the ability of food banks to secure sufficient resources to meet the needs of hungry people in their communities, and the ability of their agencies to meet the growing demand for food.

Survey Results can be found [here](#)

"If gas keeps going up, it's going to be catastrophic in every possible way," said Ross Fraser, a spokesman for America's Second Harvest. Food banks are typically run by nonprofit organizations and sometimes have to truck items 150 miles to a pantry," he said.

With summer upon us, demand for food will most likely increase. Both pantries' officials worry about getting overwhelmed with the added demand from families with children who currently get breakfast and lunch at school. At the same time, donations go down in the summer because fewer organizations and churches sponsor food drives and individual donors go away on vacation.

#### **How to...**

Save money - <http://www.couponmom.com/>

Learn about nutrition - <http://www.foodnews.org/>

Make cheap and nutritious recipes - <http://www.faqs.org/docs/consumer/recipes/>

Find more information about Federal Hunger Programs: [http://www.hungertaskforce.org/ending\\_hunger/federal\\_nutrition\\_programs/stockbox\\_csfp.php](http://www.hungertaskforce.org/ending_hunger/federal_nutrition_programs/stockbox_csfp.php)

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## Cheap Eats

### Recipe for Pasta Fagioli (Pasta and Beans)

You will need:

1 8 oz can of tomato sauce – \$1.25

1 15 oz can of cannellini beans (white kidney beans) - \$1.67

1 or 2 cloves of garlic, crushed - .95

1 lb box ditilini pasta -\$1.55

salt and pepper to taste

In a medium saucepan, combine tomato sauce, cannellini beans (with juice, do not strain), garlic and salt and pepper. Cook over medium heat for about 15 minutes. Continue cooking on low heat for another 10 minutes.

In large pot, boil water. Add ditilini and a dash of salt. Cook for about 15 minutes or to desired texture. Strain pasta and add to sauce and beans.

Serves 6 people. Total cost for this meal \$5.42

### 2nd Not-Quite-Annual AmeriSpuds Low-Cost Recipe Contest

Inspired by the “Cheap Eats” recipe listed above? Create your own deliciously-cheap recipe, and you might win Mr. Potato Head or one of many other great prizes.

AmeriSpuds is hosting a low-cost recipe contest again this year! It is featured as a Facebook Event. To review all the details and discuss the contest with other participants, log onto Facebook and cut and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=20889626659>

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## Frequently Asked Questions:

### Q: What is the Viewfinder?

*A: VISTA means view-looking out on a broad expanse. The viewfinder, a toy that all generations of VISTAs recognize, was a kind of binocular that focused on points of interest, highlights, and snapshots in living color. The VISTA Viewfinder surveys in the landscape and zeroes in on service.*



### **Q. Why the Viewfinder?**

*A. Here's your direct link to connecting with other VISTAs, learning what they are doing, and helping to spread the message of VISTA and national service!*

### **Q. How can I contribute?**

*A. Have a story to tell? Submission ideas? Contact [vistaoutreach@cns.gov](mailto:vistaoutreach@cns.gov). Use the Viewfinder to highlight your VISTA service and share your experiences with others across the country!*

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